

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau(43) International Publication Date
30 January 2003 (30.01.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 03/008605 A2(51) International Patent Classification⁷: C12P 13/00

(21) International Application Number: PCT/EP02/07354

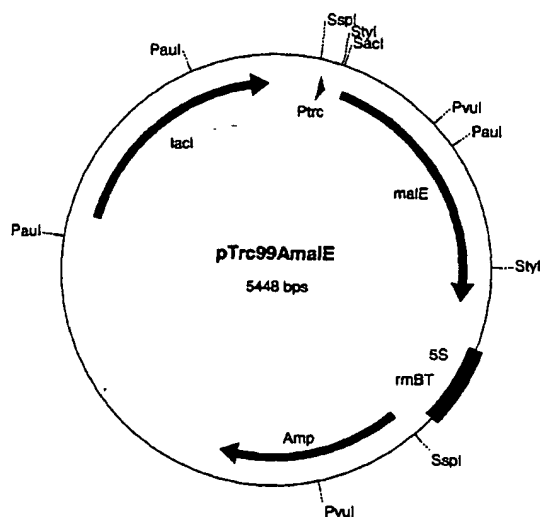
(22) International Filing Date: 3 July 2002 (03.07.2002)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
101 35 053.8 18 July 2001 (18.07.2001) DE
60/306,869 23 July 2001 (23.07.2001) USCZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH,
GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC,
LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW,
MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG,
SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ,
VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM,
KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW),
Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM),
European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE,
ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, SK,
TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ,
GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): DE-
GUSSA AG [DE/DE]; Bennigsenplatz 1, 40474 Düsseldorf (DE).Declaration under Rule 4.17:
— of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv)) for US only

(72) Inventor; and

Published:
— without international search report and to be republished
upon receipt of that report(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): RIEPING, Mechthild
[DE/DE]; Mönkebergstrasse 1, 33619 Bielefeld (DE).(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU,
AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU,For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guid-
ance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the begin-
ning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.(54) Title: PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF L-AMINO ACIDS USING STRAINS OF THE ENTEROBACTERIACEAE
FAMILY WHICH CONTAIN AN ENHANCED MALE GENE

(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a process for the preparation of L-amino acids, in particular L-threonine, in which the following steps are carried out: a) fermentation of microorganisms of the Enterobacteriaceae family which produce the desired L-amino acid and in which at least the malE gene, or the nucleotide sequence which codes for this, is or are enhanced, in particular over-expressed, b) concentration of the desired L-amino acid in the medium or in the cells of the bacteria, and c) isolation of the desired L-amino acid.

**Process for the Preparation of L-Amino Acids using
Strains of the Enterobacteriaceae Family which Contain
an Enhanced malE Gene**

Field of the Invention

- 5 This invention relates to a process for the preparation of L-amino acids, in particular L-threonine, using strains of the Enterobacteriaceae family in which at least the malE gene is enhanced.

Prior Art

- 10 L-Amino acids, in particular L-threonine, are used in human medicine and in the pharmaceuticals industry, in the foodstuffs industry and very particularly in animal nutrition.

- It is known to prepare L-amino acids by fermentation of
15 strains of Enterobacteriaceae, in particular Escherichia coli (E. coli) and Serratia marcescens. Because of their great importance, work is constantly being undertaken to improve the preparation processes. Improvements to the process can relate to fermentation measures, such as e.g.
20 stirring and supply of oxygen, or the composition of the nutrient media, such as e.g. the sugar concentration during the fermentation, or the working up to the product form, by e.g. ion exchange chromatography, or the intrinsic output properties of the microorganism itself.

- 25 Methods of mutagenesis, selection and mutant selection are used to improve the output properties of these microorganisms. Strains which are resistant to antimetabolites, such as e.g. the threonine analogue α -amino- β -hydroxyvaleric acid (AHV), or are auxotrophic for
30 metabolites of regulatory importance and produce L-amino acid, such as e.g. L-threonine, are obtained in this manner.

Methods of the recombinant DNA technique have also been employed for some years for improving the strain of strains of the Enterobacteriaceae family which produce L-amino acids, by amplifying individual amino acid biosynthesis genes and investigating the effect on the production.

Object of the Invention

The object of the invention is to provide new measures for improved fermentative preparation of L-amino acids, in particular L-threonine.

Summary of the Invention

The invention provides a process for the fermentative preparation of L-amino acids, in particular L-threonine, using microorganisms of the Enterobacteriaceae family which in particular already produce L-amino acids and in which at least the nucleotide sequence which codes for the malE gene is enhanced.

Detailed Description of the Invention

Where L-amino acids or amino acids are mentioned in the following, this means one or more amino acids, including their salts, chosen from the group consisting of L-asparagine, L-threonine, L-serine, L-glutamate, L-glycine, L-alanine, L-cysteine, L-valine, L-methionine, L-isoleucine, L-leucine, L-tyrosine, L-phenylalanine, L-histidine, L-lysine, L-tryptophan and L-arginine. L-Threonine is particularly preferred.

The term "enhancement" in this connection describes the increase in the intracellular activity of one or more enzymes or proteins in a microorganism which are coded by the corresponding DNA, for example by increasing the number of copies of the gene or genes, using a potent promoter or a gene or allele which codes for a corresponding enzyme or

protein with a high activity, and optionally combining these measures.

By enhancement measures, in particular over-expression, the activity or concentration of the corresponding protein is
5 in general increased by at least 10%, 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%, 150%, 200%, 300%, 400% or 500%, up to a maximum of 1000% or 2000%, based on that of the wild-type protein or the activity or concentration of the protein in the starting microorganism.

10 The process comprises carrying out the following steps:

- a) fermentation of microorganisms of the Enterobacteriaceae family in which at least the male gene is enhanced,
- 15 b) concentration of the corresponding L-amino acid in the medium or in the cells of the microorganisms of the Enterobacteriaceae family, and
- c) isolation of the desired L-amino acid, constituents of the fermentation broth and/or the biomass in its entirety or portions (> 0 to 100 %) thereof
20 optionally remaining in the product.

The microorganisms which the present invention provides can produce L-amino acids from glucose, sucrose, lactose, fructose, maltose, molasses, optionally starch, optionally cellulose or from glycerol and ethanol. They are
25 representatives of the Enterobacteriaceae family chosen from the genera Escherichia, Erwinia, Providencia and Serratia. The genera Escherichia and Serratia are preferred. Of the genus Escherichia the species Escherichia coli and of the genus Serratia the species Serratia
30 marcescens are to be mentioned in particular.

Suitable strains, which produce L-threonine in particular, of the genus *Escherichia*, in particular of the species *Escherichia coli*, are, for example

- Escherichia coli TF427
- 5 Escherichia coli H4578
- Escherichia coli KY10935
- Escherichia coli VNIIGenetika MG442
- Escherichia coli VNIIGenetika M1
- Escherichia coli VNIIGenetika 472T23
- 10 Escherichia coli BKIIM B-3996
- Escherichia coli kat 13
- Escherichia coli KCCM-10132.

Suitable L-threonine-producing strains of the genus *Serratia*, in particular of the species *Serratia marcescens*,
15 are, for example

- Serratia marcescens* HNr21
- Serratia marcescens* TLR156
- Serratia marcescens* T2000.

Strains from the Enterobacteriaceae family which produce L-
20 threonine preferably have, inter alia, one or more genetic or phenotypic features chosen from the group consisting of: resistance to α -amino- β -hydroxyvaleric acid, resistance to thialysine, resistance to ethionine, resistance to α -methylserine, resistance to diaminosuccinic acid,
25 resistance to α -aminobutyric acid, resistance to borrelidin, resistance to rifampicin, resistance to valine analogues, such as, for example, valine hydroxamate, resistance to purine analogues, such as, for example, 6-dimethylaminopurine, a need for L-methionine, optionally a
30 partial and compensable need for L-isoleucine, a need for meso-diaminopimelic acid, auxotrophy in respect of threonine-containing dipeptides, resistance to L-threonine, resistance to L-homoserine, resistance to L-lysine, resistance to L-methionine, resistance to L-glutamic acid,

resistance to L-aspartate, resistance to L-leucine,
resistance to L-phenylalanine, resistance to L-serine,
resistance to L-cysteine, resistance to L-valine,
sensitivity to fluoropyruvate, defective threonine
5 dehydrogenase, optionally an ability for sucrose
utilization, enhancement of the threonine operon,
enhancement of homoserine dehydrogenase I-aspartate kinase
I, preferably of the feed back resistant form, enhancement
of homoserine kinase, enhancement of threonine synthase,
10 enhancement of aspartate kinase, optionally of the feed
back resistant form, enhancement of aspartate semialdehyde
dehydrogenase, enhancement of phosphoenol pyruvate
carboxylase, optionally of the feed back resistant form,
enhancement of phosphoenol pyruvate synthase, enhancement
15 of transhydrogenase, enhancement of the RhtB gene product,
enhancement of the RhtC gene product, enhancement of the
YfiK gene product, enhancement of a pyruvate carboxylase,
and attenuation of acetic acid formation.

It has been found that microorganisms of the
20 Enterobacteriaceae family produce L-amino acids, in
particular L-threonine, in an improved manner after
enhancement, in particular over-expression, of the malE
gene.

The nucleotide sequences of the genes of Escherichia coli
25 belong to the prior art and can also be found in the genome
sequence of Escherichia coli published by Blattner et al.
(Science 277: 1453-1462 (1997)).

The following information, inter alia, on the malE gene is
known from the prior art:

30 Description: Periplasmic binding protein for maltose
transport
Reference: Duplay et al.; Journal of Biological
Chemistry 259(16): 10606-10613 (1984);

Dassa and Lambert; Research in Microbiology
148(5): 389-395 (1997); Quijcho et al.;
Structure 5(8): 997-1015 (1997)

Accession No.: AE000476

5 Alternative gene name: malB

The nucleic acid sequences can be found in the databanks of
the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) of
the National Library of Medicine (Bethesda, MD, USA), the
nucleotide sequence databank of the European Molecular
10 Biologies Laboratories (EMBL, Heidelberg, Germany or
Cambridge, UK) or the DNA databank of Japan (DDBJ, Mishima,
Japan).

The genes described in the text references mentioned can be
used according to the invention. Alleles of the genes which
15 result from the degeneracy of the genetic code or due to
"sense mutations" of neutral function can furthermore be
used.

To achieve an enhancement, for example, expression of the
genes or the catalytic properties of the proteins can be
20 increased. The two measures can optionally be combined.

To achieve an over-expression, the number of copies of the
corresponding genes can be increased, or the promoter and
regulation region or the ribosome binding site upstream of
the structural gene can be mutated. Expression cassettes
25 which are incorporated upstream of the structural gene act
in the same way. By inducible promoters, it is
additionally possible to increase the expression in the
course of fermentative L-threonine production. The
expression is likewise improved by measures to prolong the
30 life of the m-RNA. Furthermore, the enzyme activity is
also increased by preventing the degradation of the enzyme
protein. The genes or gene constructs can either be
present in plasmids with a varying number of copies, or can
be integrated and amplified in the chromosome.

Alternatively, an over-expression of the genes in question can furthermore be achieved by changing the composition of the media and the culture procedure.

Instructions in this context can be found by the expert,
5 inter alia, in Chang and Cohen (Journal of Bacteriology
134: 1141-1156 (1978)), in Hartley and Gregori (Gene 13:
347-353 (1981)), in Amann and Brosius (Gene 40: 183-190
(1985)), in de Broer et al. (Proceedings of the National
Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 80: 21-
10 25 (1983)), in LaVallie et al. (BIO/TECHNOLOGY 11: 187-193
(1993)), in PCT/US97/13359, in Llosa et al. (Plasmid 26:
222-224 (1991)), in Quandt and Klipp (Gene 80: 161-169
(1989)), in Hamilton et al. (Journal of Bacteriology 171:
4617-4622 (1989)), in Jensen and Hammer (Biotechnology and
15 Bioengineering 58: 191-195 (1998)) and in known textbooks
of genetics and molecular biology.

Plasmid vectors which are capable of replication in
Enterobacteriaceae, such as e.g. cloning vectors derived
from pACYC184 (Bartolomé et al.; Gene 102: 75-78 (1991)),
20 pTrc99A (Amann et al.; (Gene 69: 301-315 (1988)) or pSC101
derivatives (Vocke and Bastia; Proceedings of the National
Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 80
(21): 6557-6561 (1983)) can be used. A strain transformed
with a plasmid vector, where the plasmid vector carries at
25 least the *malE* gene, or the nucleotide sequence which codes
for this, can be employed in a process according to the
invention.

It is also possible to transfer mutations which affect the
expression of the particular gene into various strains by
30 sequence exchange (Hamilton et al.; Journal of Bacteriology
171: 4617-4622 (1989)), conjugation or transduction.

It may furthermore be advantageous for the production of L-
amino acids, in particular L-threonine, with strains of the
Enterobacteriaceae family, in addition to enhancement of

the malE gene, for one or more enzymes of the known threonine biosynthesis pathway or enzymes of anaplerotic metabolism or enzymes for the production of reduced nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate or enzymes of glycolysis or PTS enzymes or enzymes of sulfur metabolism to be enhanced.

Thus, for example, at the same time one or more of the genes chosen from the group consisting of

- 10 • the thrABC operon which codes for aspartate kinase, homoserine dehydrogenase, homoserine kinase and threonine synthase (US-A-4,278,765),
- the pyc gene of Corynebacterium glutamicum which codes for pyruvate carboxylase (WO 99/18228),
- 15 • the pps gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate synthase (Molecular and General Genetics 231(2): 332-336 (1992)),
- the ppc gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate carboxylase (Gene 31: 279-283 (1984)),
- 20 • the pntA and pntB genes which code for transhydrogenase (European Journal of Biochemistry 158: 647-653 (1986)),
- the rhtB gene which imparts homoserine resistance (EP-A-0 994 190),
- the mqo gene which codes for malate:quinone oxidoreductase (WO 02/06459),
- 25 • the rhtC gene which imparts threonine resistance (EP-A-1 013 765),
- the thrE gene of Corynebacterium glutamicum which codes for the threonine export protein (WO 01/92545),

- the *gdhA* gene which codes for glutamate dehydrogenase (Nucleic Acids Research 11: 5257-5266 (1983); Gene 23: 199-209 (1983)),
- the *hns* gene which codes for the DNA-binding protein HLP-II (Molecular and General Genetics 212: 199-202 (1988)),
- the *pgm* gene which codes for phosphoglucomutase (Journal of Bacteriology 176: 5847-5851 (1994)),
- the *fba* gene which codes for fructose biphosphate aldolase (Biochemical Journal 257: 529-534 (1989)),
- the *ptsH* gene of the *ptsHIcrr* operon which codes for the phosphohistidine protein hexose phosphotransferase of the phosphotransferase system PTS (Journal of Biological Chemistry 262: 16241-16253 (1987)),
- the *ptsI* gene of the *ptsHIcrr* operon which codes for enzyme I of the phosphotransferase system PTS (Journal of Biological Chemistry 262: 16241-16253 (1987)),
- the *crr* gene of the *ptsHIcrr* operon which codes for the glucose-specific IIA component of the phosphotransferase system PTS (Journal of Biological Chemistry 262: 16241-16253 (1987)),
- the *ptsG* gene which codes for the glucose-specific IIBC component (Journal of Biological Chemistry 261: 16398-16403 (1986)),
- the *lrp* gene which codes for the regulator of the leucine regulon (Journal of Biological Chemistry 266: 10768-10774 (1991)),
- the *mopB* gene which codes for 10 Kd chaperone (Journal of Biological Chemistry 261: 12414-12419 (1986)) and is also known by the name *groES*,

- the *ahpC* gene of the *ahpCF* operon which codes for the small sub-unit of alkyl hydroperoxide reductase (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 92: 7617-7621 (1995)),
- 5 • the *ahpF* gene of the *ahpCF* operon which codes for the large sub-unit of alkyl hydroperoxide reductase (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 92: 7617-7621 (1995)),
- the *cysK* gene which codes for cysteine synthase A
10 (Journal of Bacteriology 170: 3150-3157 (1988)),
- the *cysB* gene which codes for the regulator of the *cys* regulon (Journal of Biological Chemistry 262: 5999-6005 (1987)),
- the *cysJ* gene of the *cysJIH* operon which codes for the
15 flavoprotein of NADPH sulfite reductase (Journal of Biological Chemistry 264: 15796-15808 (1989), Journal of Biological Chemistry 264: 15726-15737 (1989)),
- the *cysI* gene of the *cysJIH* operon which codes for the haemoprotein of NADPH sulfite reductase (Journal of
20 Biological Chemistry 264: 15796-15808 (1989), Journal of Biological Chemistry 264: 15726-15737 (1989)),
- the *cysH* gene of the *cysJIH* operon which codes for adenylyl sulfate reductase (Journal of Biological
25 Chemistry 264: 15796-15808 (1989), Journal of Biological Chemistry 264: 15726-15737 (1989)),
- the *phoB* gene of the *phoBR* operon which codes for the positive regulator PhoB of the *pho* regulon (Journal of Molecular Biology 190 (1): 37-44 (1986)),
- the *phoR* gene of the *phoBR* operon which codes for the
30 sensor protein of the *pho* regulon (Journal of Molecular Biology 192 (3): 549-556 (1986)),

- the *phoE* gene which codes for protein E of the outer cell membrane (Journal of Molecular Biology 163 (4): 513-532 (1983)),
- 5 • the *pykF* gene which codes for fructose-stimulated pyruvate kinase I (Journal of Bacteriology 177 (19): 5719-5722 (1995)),
- the *pfkB* gene which codes for 6-phosphofructokinase II (Gene 28 (3): 337-342 (1984)),
- 10 • the *talB* gene which codes for transaldolase B (Journal of Bacteriology 177 (20): 5930-5936 (1995)),
- the *rseA* gene of the *rseABC* operon which codes for a membrane protein with anti- σ^E activity (Molecular Microbiology 24 (2): 355-371 (1997)),
- 15 • the *rseC* gene of the *rseABC* operon which codes for a global regulator of the σ^E factor (Molecular Microbiology 24 (2): 355-371 (1997)),
- the *sodA* gene which codes for superoxide dismutase (Journal of Bacteriology 155 (3): 1078-1087 (1983)),
- 20 • the *sucA* gene of the *sucABCD* operon which codes for the decarboxylase sub-unit of 2-ketoglutarate dehydrogenase (European Journal of Biochemistry 141 (2): 351-359 (1984)),
- the *sucB* gene of the *sucABCD* operon which codes for the dihydrolipoyltranssuccinase E2 sub-unit of 2-
25 ketoglutarate dehydrogenase (European Journal of Biochemistry 141 (2): 361-374 (1984)),
- the *sucC* gene of the *sucABCD* operon which codes for the β -sub-unit of succinyl-CoA synthetase (Biochemistry 24 (22): 6245-6252 (1985)) and

- the *sucD* gene of the *sucABCD* operon which codes for the α -sub-unit of succinyl-CoA synthetase (Biochemistry 24 (22): 6245-6252 (1985)),

can be enhanced, in particular over-expressed.

- 5 It may furthermore be advantageous for the production of L-amino acids, in particular L-threonine, in addition to enhancement of the *malE* gene, for one or more of the genes chosen from the group consisting of
- the *tdh* gene which codes for threonine dehydrogenase
10 (Journal of Bacteriology 169: 4716-4721 (1987)),
 - the *mdh* gene which codes for malate dehydrogenase (E.C. 1.1.1.37) (Archives in Microbiology 149: 36-42 (1987)),
 - the gene product of the open reading frame (orf) *yjfa*
15 (Accession Number AAC77180 of the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI, Bethesda, MD, USA)),
 - the gene product of the open reading frame (orf) *ytfp*
(Accession Number AAC77179 of the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI, Bethesda, MD, USA)),
 - the *pckA* gene which codes for the enzyme phosphoenol
20 pyruvate carboxykinase (Journal of Bacteriology 172: 7151-7156 (1990)),
 - the *poxB* gene which codes for pyruvate oxidase (Nucleic Acids Research 14(13): 5449-5460 (1986)),
 - the *aceA* gene which codes for the enzyme isocitrate
25 lyase (Journal of Bacteriology 170: 4528-4536 (1988)),
 - the *dgsA* gene which codes for the DgsA regulator of the phosphotransferase system (Bioscience, Biotechnology and Biochemistry 59: 256-251 (1995)) and is also known under the name of the *mlc* gene,

- the fruR gene which codes for the fructose repressor (Molecular and General Genetics 226: 332-336 (1991)) and is also known under the name of the cra gene and
- the rpoS gene which codes for the sigma³⁸ factor (WO 01/05939) and is also known under the name of the katF gene,

to be attenuated, in particular eliminated or for the expression thereof to be reduced.

The term "attenuation" in this connection describes the reduction or elimination of the intracellular activity of one or more enzymes (proteins) in a microorganism which are coded by the corresponding DNA, for example by using a weak promoter or a gene or allele which codes for a corresponding enzyme with a low activity or inactivates the corresponding enzyme (protein) or gene, and optionally combining these measures.

By attenuation measures, the activity or concentration of the corresponding protein is in general reduced to 0 to 75%, 0 to 50%, 0 to 25%, 0 to 10% or 0 to 5% of the activity or concentration of the wild-type protein or of the activity or concentration of the protein in the starting microorganism.

It may furthermore be advantageous for the production of L-amino acids, in particular L-threonine, in addition to enhancement of the malE gene, to eliminate undesirable side reactions (Nakayama: "Breeding of Amino Acid Producing Microorganisms", in: Overproduction of Microbial Products, Krumphanzl, Sikyta, Vanek (eds.), Academic Press, London, UK, 1982).

The microorganisms produced according to the invention can be cultured in the batch process (batch culture), the fed batch process (feed process) or the repeated fed batch process (repetitive feed process). A summary of known

culture methods is described in the textbook by Chmiel (Bioprozesstechnik 1. Einführung in die Bioverfahrenstechnik [Bioprocess Technology 1. Introduction to Bioprocess Technology (Gustav Fischer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1991)) or in the textbook by Storhas (Bioreaktoren und periphere Einrichtungen [Bioreactors and Peripheral Equipment] (Vieweg Verlag, Braunschweig/Wiesbaden, 1994)).

The culture medium to be used must meet the requirements of the particular strains in a suitable manner. Descriptions of culture media for various microorganisms are contained in the handbook "Manual of Methods for General Bacteriology" of the American Society for Bacteriology (Washington D.C., USA, 1981).

Sugars and carbohydrates, such as e.g. glucose, sucrose, lactose, fructose, maltose, molasses, starch and optionally cellulose, oils and fats, such as e.g. soya oil, sunflower oil, groundnut oil and coconut fat, fatty acids, such as e.g. palmitic acid, stearic acid and linoleic acid, alcohols, such as e.g. glycerol and ethanol, and organic acids, such as e.g. acetic acid, can be used as the source of carbon. These substances can be used individually or as a mixture.

Organic nitrogen-containing compounds, such as peptones, yeast extract, meat extract, malt extract, corn steep liquor, soya bean flour and urea, or inorganic compounds, such as ammonium sulfate, ammonium chloride, ammonium phosphate, ammonium carbonate and ammonium nitrate, can be used as the source of nitrogen. The sources of nitrogen can be used individually or as a mixture.

Phosphoric acid, potassium dihydrogen phosphate or dipotassium hydrogen phosphate or the corresponding sodium-containing salts can be used as the source of phosphorus. The culture medium must furthermore comprise salts of metals, such as e.g. magnesium sulfate or iron sulfate,

which are necessary for growth. Finally, essential growth substances, such as amino acids and vitamins, can be employed in addition to the abovementioned substances. Suitable precursors can moreover be added to the culture medium. The starting substances mentioned can be added to the culture in the form of a single batch, or can be fed in during the culture in a suitable manner.

Basic compounds, such as sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, ammonia or aqueous ammonia, or acid compounds, such as phosphoric acid or sulfuric acid, can be employed in a suitable manner to control the pH of the culture. Antifoams, such as e.g. fatty acid polyglycol esters, can be employed to control the development of foam. Suitable substances having a selective action, e.g. antibiotics, can be added to the medium to maintain the stability of plasmids. To maintain aerobic conditions, oxygen or oxygen-containing gas mixtures, such as e.g. air, are introduced into the culture. The temperature of the culture is usually 25°C to 45°C, and preferably 30°C to 40°C. Culturing is continued until a maximum of L-amino acids or L-threonine has formed. This target is usually reached within 10 hours to 160 hours.

The analysis of L-amino acids can be carried out by anion exchange chromatography with subsequent ninhydrin derivation, as described by Spackman et al. (Analytical Chemistry 30: 1190-1206 (1958)), or it can take place by reversed phase HPLC as described by Lindroth et al. (Analytical Chemistry 51: 1167-1174 (1979)).

The process according to the invention is used for the fermentative preparation of L-amino acids, such as, for example, L-threonine, L-isoleucine, L-valine, L-methionine, L-homoserine and L-lysine, in particular L-threonine.

The present invention is explained in more detail in the following with the aid of embodiment examples.

The minimal (M9) and complete media (LB) for *Escherichia coli* used are described by J.H. Miller (A Short Course in Bacterial Genetics (1992), Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press). The isolation of plasmid DNA from *Escherichia coli* and all techniques of restriction, ligation, Klenow and alkaline phosphatase treatment are carried out by the method of Sambrook et al. (Molecular Cloning - A Laboratory Manual (1989) Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press). Unless described otherwise, the transformation of *Escherichia coli* is carried out by the method of Chung et al. (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America 86: 2172-2175 (1989)).

The incubation temperature for the preparation of strains and transformants is 37°C.

15 Example 1

Construction of the expression plasmid pTrc99Amale

The male gene from *E. coli* K12 is amplified using the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and synthetic oligonucleotides. Starting from the nucleotide sequence of the male gene in *E. coli* K12 MG1655 (Accession Number AE000476, Blattner et al. (Science 277: 1453-1462 (1997))), PCR primers are synthesized (MWG Biotech, Ebersberg, Germany). The sequences of the primers are modified such that recognition sites for restriction enzymes are formed. The recognition sequence for SacI is chosen for the male1 primer and the recognition sequence for StuI for the male2 primer, which are marked by underlining in the nucleotide sequence shown below:

male1: 5' - TCACGAGCTCTTCACCAACTAGGACCATAG - 3' (SEQ ID No. 1)

male2: 5' - CGTCTTATCAGGCCTACATACG - 3' (SEQ ID No. 2)

The chromosomal E. coli K12 MG1655 DNA employed for the PCR is isolated according to the manufacturer's instructions with "Qiagen Genomic-tips 100/G" (QIAGEN, Hilden, Germany). A DNA fragment approx. 1300 bp in size can be amplified
5 with the specific primers under standard PCR conditions (Innis et al. (1990) PCR Protocols. A guide to methods and applications, Academic Press) with Pfu-DNA polymerase (Promega Corporation, Madison, USA). The PCR product is cleaved with the restriction enzymes SacI and StuI and
10 ligated with the vector pTrc99A (Pharmacia Biotech, Uppsala, Sweden), which has been digested with the enzymes SacI and SmaI. The E. coli strain XL1-Blue MRF' (Stratagene, La Jolla, USA) is transformed with the ligation batch and plasmid-carrying cells are selected on
15 LB agar, to which 50 µg/ml ampicillin are added. Successful cloning can be demonstrated after plasmid DNA isolation by control cleavage with the enzymes PvuI, SspI and StyI. The plasmid is called pTrc99Amale (Figure 1).

Example 2

20 Preparation of L-threonine with the strain MG442/pTrc99Amale

The L-threonine-producing E. coli strain MG442 is described in the patent specification US-A- 4,278,765 and deposited as CMIM B-1628 at the Russian National Collection for
25 Industrial Microorganisms (VKPM, Moscow, Russia).

The strain MG442 is transformed with the expression plasmid pTrc99Amale described in example 1 and with the vector pTrc99A and plasmid-carrying cells are selected on LB agar with 50 µg/ml ampicillin. The strains MG442/pTrc99Amale and
30 MG442/pTrc99A are formed in this manner. Selected individual colonies are then multiplied further on minimal medium with the following composition: 3.5 g/l Na₂HPO₄*2H₂O, 1.5 g/l KH₂PO₄, 1 g/l NH₄Cl, 0.1 g/l MgSO₄*7H₂O, 2 g/l glucose, 20 g/l agar, 50 mg/l ampicillin. The formation of

- L-threonine is checked in batch cultures of 10 ml contained in 100 ml conical flasks. For this, 10 ml of preculture medium of the following composition: 2 g/l yeast extract, 10 g/l $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$, 1 g/l KH_2PO_4 , 0.5 g/l $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 15 g/l CaCO_3 , 20 g/l glucose, 50 mg/l ampicillin are inoculated and the batch is incubated for 16 hours at 37°C and 180 rpm on an ESR incubator from Kühner AG (Birsfelden, Switzerland).
- 250 µl portions of this preculture are transinoculated into 10 ml of production medium (25 g/l $(\text{NH}_4)_2\text{SO}_4$, 2 g/l KH_2PO_4 , 1 g/l $\text{MgSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 0.03 g/l $\text{FeSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 0.018 g/l $\text{MnSO}_4 \cdot 1\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 30 g/l CaCO_3 , 20 g/l glucose, 50 mg/l ampicillin) and the batch is incubated for 48 hours at 37°C. The formation of L-threonine by the starting strain MG442 is investigated in the same manner, but no addition of ampicillin to the medium takes place. After the incubation the optical density (OD) of the culture suspension is determined with an LP2W photometer from Dr. Lange (Düsseldorf, Germany) at a measurement wavelength of 660 nm.
- The concentration of L-threonine formed is then determined in the sterile-filtered culture supernatant with an amino acid analyzer from Eppendorf-BioTronik (Hamburg, Germany) by ion exchange chromatography and post-column reaction with ninhydrin detection.
- The result of the experiment is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Strain	OD (660 nm)	L-Threonine g/l
MG442	5.6	1.4
MG442/pTrc99A	3.8	1.3
MG442/pTrc99AmalE	5.0	2.4

Brief Description of the Figure:

Figure 1: Map of the plasmid pTrc99AmalE containing the
5 malE gene.

The length data are to be understood as approx. data. The abbreviations and designations used have the following meaning:

- Amp: Ampicillin resistance gene
- 10 • lacI: Gene for the repressor protein of the trc promoter
- Ptrc: trc promoter region, IPTG-inducible
- malE: Coding region of the malE gene
- 5S: 5S rRNA region
- 15 • rrnBT: rRNA terminator region

The abbreviations for the restriction enzymes have the following meaning

- PauI: Restriction endonuclease from *Paracoccus alcaliphilus*

- PvuI: Restriction endonuclease from *Proteus vulgaris* (ATCC 13315)
- SacI: Restriction endonuclease from *Streptomyces achromogenes* (ATCC 12767)
- 5 • SspI: Restriction endonuclease from *Sphaerotilus* species ATCC 13925
- StyI: Restriction endonuclease from *Salmonella typhi*

What is claimed is:

1. A process for the preparation of L-amino acids, in particular L-threonine, which comprises carrying out the following steps:
 - 5 a) fermentation of microorganisms of the Enterobacteriaceae family which produce the desired L-amino acid and in which at least the malE gene, or the nucleotide sequence which codes for this, is enhanced, in particular over-expressed,
 - 10 b) concentration of the desired L-amino acid in the medium or in the cells of the microorganisms, and
 - c) isolation of the desired L-amino acid, constituents of the fermentation broth and/or the biomass in its entirety or portions (> 0 to 100%) thereof
 - 15 optionally remaining in the product.
2. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein microorganisms in which further genes of the biosynthesis pathway of the desired L-amino acid are additionally enhanced are employed.
- 20 3. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein microorganisms in which the metabolic pathways which reduce the formation of the desired L-amino acid are at least partly eliminated are employed.
4. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the expression
- 25 of the polynucleotide which codes for the malE gene is increased.
5. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the regulatory and/or catalytic properties of the polypeptide (protein) for which the polynucleotide malE codes are
- 30 improved or increased.

6. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein, for the preparation of L-amino acids, microorganisms of the Enterobacteriaceae family in which in addition at the same time one or more of the genes chosen from the group consisting of:
- 5
- 6.1 the thrABC operon which codes for aspartate kinase, homoserine dehydrogenase, homoserine kinase and threonine synthase,
- 10
- 6.2 the pyc gene which codes for pyruvate carboxylase,
- 6.3 the pps gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate synthase,
- 6.4 the ppc gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate carboxylase,
- 15
- 6.5 the pntA and pntB genes which code for transhydrogenase,
- 6.6 the rhtB gene which imparts homoserine resistance,
- 20
- 6.7 the mgo gene which codes for malate:quinone oxidoreductase,
- 6.8 the rhtC gene which imparts threonine resistance,
- 6.9 the thrE gene which codes for the threonine export protein,
- 25
- 6.10 the gdhA gene which codes for glutamate dehydrogenase,
- 6.11 the hns gene which codes for the DNA-binding protein HLP-II,

- 6.12 the pgm gene which codes for
phosphoglucomutase,
- 6.13 the fba gene which codes for fructose
biphosphate aldolase,
- 5 6.14 the ptsH gene which codes for the
phosphohistidine protein hexose
phosphotransferase,
- 6.15 the ptsI gene which codes for enzyme I of the
phosphotransferase system,
- 10 6.16 the crr gene which codes for the glucose-
specific IIA component,
- 6.17 the ptsG gene which codes for the glucose-
specific IIBC component,
- 6.18 the lrp gene which codes for the regulator of
the leucine regulon,
- 15 6.19 the mopB gene which codes for 10 Kd chaperone,
- 6.20 the ahpC gene which codes for the small sub-
unit of alkyl hydroperoxide reductase,
- 6.21 the ahpF gene which codes for the large sub-
unit of alkyl hydroperoxide reductase,
- 20 6.22 the cysK gene which codes for cysteine synthase
A,
- 6.23 the cysB gene which codes for the regulator of
the cys regulon,
- 25 6.24 the cysJ gene which codes for the flavoprotein
of NADPH sulfite reductase,
- 6.25 the cysI gene which codes for the haemoprotein
of NADPH sulfite reductase,

- 6.26 the cysH gene which codes for adenylyl sulfate reductase,
- 6.27 the phoB gene which codes for the positive regulator PhoB of the pho regulon,
- 5 6.28 the phoR gene which codes for the sensor protein of the pho regulon,
- 6.29 the phoE gene which codes for protein E of outer cell membrane,
- 10 6.30 the pykF gene which codes for fructose-stimulated pyruvate kinase I,
- 6.31 the pfkB gene which codes for 6-phosphofructokinase II,
- 6.32 the talB gene which codes for transaldolase B,
- 15 6.33 the rseA gene which codes for a membrane protein which acts as a negative regulator on sigmaE activity,
- 6.34 the rseC gene which codes for a global regulator of the sigmaE factor,
- 20 6.35 the sodA gene which codes for superoxide dismutase,
- 6.36 the suCA gene which codes for the decarboxylase sub-unit of 2-ketoglutarate dehydrogenase,
- 25 6.37 the sucB gene which codes for the dihydrolipoyltranssuccinase E2 sub-unit of 2-ketoglutarate dehydrogenase,
- 6.38 the sucC gene which codes for the β -sub-unit of succinyl-CoA synthetase,

6.39 the sucD gene which codes for the α -sub-unit of succinyl-CoA synthetase,

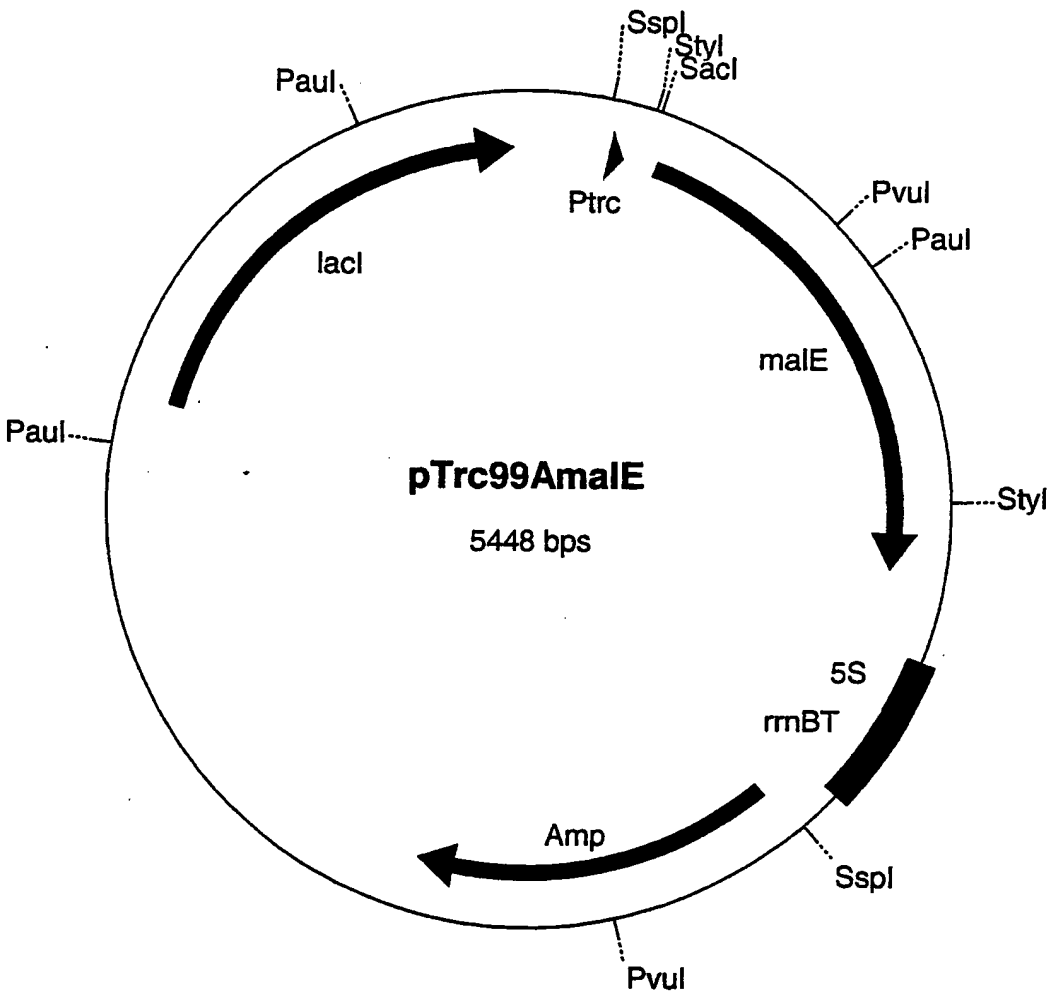
is or are enhanced, in particular over-expressed, are fermented.

- 5 7. A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein, for the preparation of L-amino acids, microorganisms of the Enterobacteriaceae family in which in addition at the same time one or more of the genes chosen from the group consisting of:

- 10 7.1 the tdh gene which codes for threonine dehydrogenase,
- 7.2 the mdh gene which codes for malate dehydrogenase,
- 15 7.3 the gene product of the open reading frame (orf) yjfa,
- 7.4 the gene product of the open reading frame (orf) ytfp,
- 7.5 the pckA gene which codes for phosphoenolpyruvate carboxykinase,
- 20 7.6 the poxB gene which codes for pyruvate oxidase,
- 7.7 the aceA gene which codes for isocitrate lyase,
- 7.8 the dgsA gene which codes for the DgsA regulator of the phosphotransferase system,
- 25 7.9 the fruR gene which codes for the fructose repressor,
- 7.10 the rpoS gene which codes for the sigma³⁸ factor

is or are attenuated, in particular eliminated or reduced in expression, are fermented.

Figure 1:



SEQUENCE PROTOCOL

5 <110> Degussa AG
 <120> Process for the preparation of L-amino acids using
 strains of the Enterobacteriaceae family which contain an
 enhanced malE gene
10 <130> 020275BT
 <160> 2
 <170> PatentIn version 3.1
15 <210> 1
 <211> 30
 <212> DNA
 <213> artificial sequence
20 <220>
 <221> Primer
 <222> (1)..(30).
 <223> malE1
25 <400> 1
 tcacgagctc ttcaccaact aggaccatag
 30
30 <210> 2
 <211> 22
 <212> DNA
 <213> artificial sequence
35 <220>
 <221> Primer
 <222> (1)..(22)
 <223> malE2
40 <400> 2
 cgtcttatca ggcctacata cg
 22

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
30 January 2003 (30.01.2003)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 03/008605 A3

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **C12N 15/31**,
C12P 13/08, 13/04, C07K 14/245, C12P 13/08, C12R 1/19

(21) International Application Number: PCT/EP02/07354

(22) International Filing Date: 3 July 2002 (03.07.2002)

(25) Filing Language: English

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
101 35 053.8 18 July 2001 (18.07.2001) DE
60/306,869 23 July 2001 (23.07.2001) US

(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **DE-GUSSA AG** [DE/DE]; Bënnigsenplatz 1, 40474 Düsseldorf (DE).

(72) Inventor; and

(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): **RIEPING, Mechthild** [DE/DE]; Mönkebergstrasse 1, 33619 Bielefeld (DE).

(81) Designated States (national): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH,

GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NO, NZ, OM, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(84) Designated States (regional): ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE, SK, TR), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

Declaration under Rule 4.17:

— of inventorship (Rule 4.17(iv)) for US only

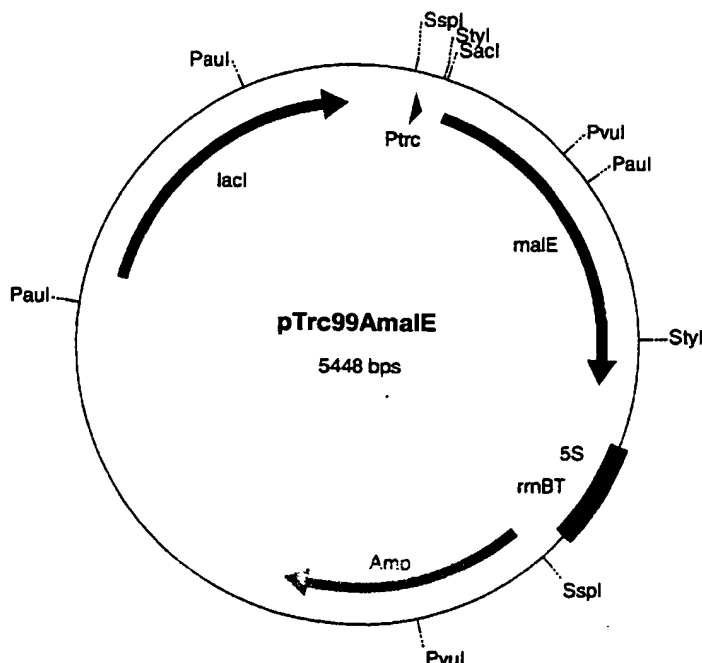
Published:

— with international search report

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:
30 October 2003

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.

(54) Title: PROCESS FOR THE PREPARATION OF L-AMINO ACIDS USING STRAINS OF THE ENTEROBACTERIACEAE FAMILY WHICH CONTAIN AN ENHANCED MALE GENE



(57) Abstract: The invention relates to a process for the preparation of L-amino acids, in particular L-threonine, in which the following steps are carried out: a) fermentation of microorganisms of the Enterobacteriaceae family which produce the desired L-amino acid and in which at least the malE gene, or the nucleotide sequence which codes for this, is or are enhanced, in particular over-expressed, b) concentration of the desired L-amino acid in the medium or in the cells of the bacteria, and c) isolation of the desired L-amino acid.

WO 03/008605 A3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

PCT/EP 02/07354

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 C12N15/31 C12P13/08 C12P13/04 C07K14/245 //(C12P13/08, C12R1:19)

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 C12P C12N C07K

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ, BIOSIS, MEDLINE, EMBASE

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	FR 2 796 080 A (ORSAN) 12 January 2001 (2001-01-12) the whole document	1-7
A	NIKAIDO H: "Maltose transport system of Escherichia coli: an ABC-type transporter." FEBS LETTERS. NETHERLANDS, vol. 346, no. 1, 6 June 1994 (1994-06-06), pages 55-58, XP002243606 ISSN: 0014-5793 abstract	1-7
A	EP 0 994 190 A (AJINOMOTO KK) 19 April 2000 (2000-04-19) the whole document example 4 claims 6,7,10,11	1-7



Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.



Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

- *A* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- *T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- *X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- *Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- *Z* document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

11 June 2003

Date of mailing of the international search report

30/06/2003

Name and mailing address of the ISA

NL - Eindhoven Rijswijk
Tel (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
Fax (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

van de Kamp, M

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/EP 02/07354

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	WO 99 53035 A (ALTMAN ELLIOT ;GOKARN RAVI R (US); EITEMAN MARK A (US); UNIV GEORG) 21 October 1999 (1999-10-21) page 5, line 20-24 examples 4,7,9,10 claims 31,38,41,49 figures 1,4	1-7
A	MICHAL G: "Biochemical pathways: an atlas of biochemistry and molecular biology" 1999, JOHN WILEY & SONS INC. AND SPEKTRUM AKADEMISCHER VERLAG, NEW YORK - HEIDELBERG XP002242199 ISBN: 0-471-33130-9 figure 3.8-2 figures 4.2-1, 4.5-1 and 4.5-2	1-7
A	KRAEMER R: "Genetic and physiological approaches for the production of amino acids" JOURNAL OF BIOTECHNOLOGY, vol. 45, no. 1, 1996, pages 1-21, XP002178648 ISSN: 0168-1656 the whole document	1-7
A	JETTEN M S M ET AL.: "Recent advances in the physiology and genetics of amino acid-producing bacteria." CRC CRITICAL REVIEWS IN BIOTECHNOLOGY, vol. 15, no. 1, 1995, pages 73-103, XP000613291 ISSN: 0738-8551 figure 1 page 90, left-hand column, line 1 -page 92, left-hand column, line 17	1-7
A	US 4 278 765 A (DEBABOV VLADIMIR G ET AL) 14 July 1981 (1981-07-14) cited in the application the whole document	1-7
A	EP 0 643 135 A (AJINOMOTO KK) 15 March 1995 (1995-03-15) the whole document	1-7
A	EP 0 237 819 A (KYOWA HAKKO KOGYO KK) 23 September 1987 (1987-09-23) the whole document	1-7

-/--

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

PCT/EP 02/07354

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	<p>DATABASE WPI Section Ch, Week 199148 Derwent Publications Ltd., London, GB; Class B05, AN 1991-351136 XP002241222 & JP 03 236786 A (KYOWA HAKKO KOGYO KK), 22 October 1991 (1991-10-22) abstract</p>	1-7
E	<p>WO 03 008606 A (RIEPING MECHTHILD ;DEGUSSA (DE)) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30) the whole document claims 1,6</p>	1-7
E	<p>WO 03 008607 A (RIEPING MECHTHILD ;DEGUSSA (DE)) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30) the whole document claims 1,6</p>	1-7
E	<p>WO 03 008608 A (RIEPING MECHTHILD ;DEGUSSA (DE)) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30) the whole document claims 1,6</p>	1-7
E	<p>WO 03 008609 A (RIEPING MECHTHILD ;DEGUSSA (DE)) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30) the whole document claims 1,6</p>	1-7
E	<p>WO 03 008610 A (RIEPING MECHTHILD ;DEGUSSA (DE)) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30) the whole document claims 1,6</p>	1-7
E	<p>WO 03 008611 A (RIEPING MECHTHILD ;DEGUSSA (DE)) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30) the whole document claims 1,6</p>	1-7
E	<p>WO 03 008612 A (RIEPING MECHTHILD ;DEGUSSA (DE)) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30) the whole document claims 1,6</p>	1-7
E	<p>WO 03 008613 A (RIEPING MECHTHILD ;DEGUSSA (DE)) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30) the whole document claims 1,6</p>	1-7
E	<p>WO 03 008614 A (RIEPING MECHTHILD ;DEGUSSA (DE)) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30) the whole document claims 1,6</p>	1-7
	-/-	

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/EP 02/07354

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
E	WO 03 008615 A (RIEPING MECHTHILD ;DEGUSSA (DE)) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30) the whole document claims 1,6 -----	1-7
T	WO 03 008600 A (DEGUSSA ;HERMANN THOMAS (DE)) 30 January 2003 (2003-01-30) the whole document claim 1 -----	1-7

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/EP 02/07354

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
FR 2796080	A	12-01-2001	FR 2796080 A1	12-01-2001
EP 0994190	A	19-04-2000	RU 2144564 C1	20-01-2000
			AU 4755099 A	20-04-2000
			BR 9904955 A	12-12-2000
			CN 1254014 A	24-05-2000
			EP 0994190 A2	19-04-2000
			JP 2000116390 A	25-04-2000
			KR 2000029006 A	25-05-2000
			SK 140899 A3	16-05-2000
			US 6303348 B1	16-10-2001
			US 2002102670 A1	01-08-2002
			US 2002058314 A1	16-05-2002
			ZA 9906042 A	04-04-2000
WO 9953035	A	21-10-1999	AU 760575 B2	15-05-2003
			AU 3555999 A	01-11-1999
			BR 9909615 A	12-12-2000
			CA 2325598 A1	21-10-1999
			EP 1073722 A1	07-02-2001
			JP 2002511250 T	16-04-2002
			WO 9953035 A1	21-10-1999
			US 2003087381 A1	08-05-2003
			US 6455284 B1	24-09-2002
US 4278765	A	14-07-1981	SU 875663 A1	15-09-1982
			HU 190999 B	28-12-1986
EP 0643135	A	15-03-1995	AT 203769 T	15-08-2001
			CZ 9401658 A3	15-12-1994
			DE 69330518 D1	06-09-2001
			DE 69330518 T2	08-05-2002
			DK 643135 T3	15-10-2001
			EP 0643135 A1	15-03-1995
			JP 3331472 B2	07-10-2002
			SK 81994 A3	10-05-1995
			US 5661012 A	26-08-1997
			EP 1020526 A2	19-07-2000
			ES 2158867 T3	16-09-2001
			WO 9411517 A1	26-05-1994
			RU 2113484 C1	20-06-1998
EP 0237819	A	23-09-1987	DE 3788583 D1	10-02-1994
			DE 3788583 T2	19-05-1994
			EP 0237819 A2	23-09-1987
			JP 2574786 B2	22-01-1997
			JP 63273487 A	10-11-1988
			KR 9108634 B1	19-10-1991
			US 5017483 A	21-05-1991
JP 3236786	A	22-10-1991	JP 2877414 B2	31-03-1999
WO 03008606	A	30-01-2003	DE 10135053 A1	06-02-2003
			WO 03008605 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008606 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008607 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008608 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008609 A2	30-01-2003

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/EP 02/07354

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 03008606	A		WO 03008610 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008611 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008612 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008613 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008614 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008615 A2	30-01-2003
WO 03008607	A	30-01-2003	DE 10135053 A1	06-02-2003
			WO 03008605 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008606 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008607 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008608 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008609 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008610 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008611 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008612 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008613 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008614 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008615 A2	30-01-2003
WO 03008608	A	30-01-2003	DE 10135053 A1	06-02-2003
			WO 03008605 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008606 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008607 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008608 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008609 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008610 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008611 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008612 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008613 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008614 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008615 A2	30-01-2003
WO 03008609	A	30-01-2003	DE 10135053 A1	06-02-2003
			WO 03008605 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008606 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008607 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008608 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008609 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008610 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008611 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008612 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008613 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008614 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008615 A2	30-01-2003
WO 03008610	A	30-01-2003	DE 10135053 A1	06-02-2003
			WO 03008605 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008606 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008607 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008608 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008609 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008610 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008611 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008612 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008613 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008614 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008615 A2	30-01-2003

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/EP 02/07354

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 03008611	A	30-01-2003	DE 10135053 A1	06-02-2003
			WO 03008605 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008606 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008607 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008608 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008609 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008610 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008611 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008612 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008613 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008614 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008615 A2	30-01-2003
WO 03008612	A	30-01-2003	DE 10135053 A1	06-02-2003
			WO 03008605 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008606 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008607 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008608 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008609 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008610 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008611 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008612 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008613 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008614 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008615 A2	30-01-2003
WO 03008613	A	30-01-2003	DE 10135053 A1	06-02-2003
			WO 03008605 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008606 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008607 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008608 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008609 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008610 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008611 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008612 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008613 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008614 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008615 A2	30-01-2003
WO 03008614	A	30-01-2003	DE 10135053 A1	06-02-2003
			WO 03008605 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008606 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008607 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008608 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008609 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008610 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008611 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008612 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008613 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008614 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008615 A2	30-01-2003
WO 03008615	A	30-01-2003	DE 10135053 A1	06-02-2003
			WO 03008605 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008606 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008607 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008608 A2	30-01-2003
			WO 03008609 A2	30-01-2003

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/EP 02/07354

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
WO 03008615 A		WO 03008610 A2	30-01-2003
		WO 03008611 A2	30-01-2003
		WO 03008612 A2	30-01-2003
		WO 03008613 A2	30-01-2003
		WO 03008614 A2	30-01-2003
		WO 03008615 A2	30-01-2003
WO 03008600 A	30-01-2003	DE 10135051 A1	06-02-2003
		WO 03008600 A2	30-01-2003
		WO 03008602 A2	30-01-2003
		WO 03008603 A2	30-01-2003
		WO 03008604 A2	30-01-2003
		WO 03008616 A2	30-01-2003

**This Page is Inserted by IFW Indexing and Scanning
Operations and is not part of the Official Record**

BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES

Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images include but are not limited to the items checked:

- ☐ **BLACK BORDERS**
- ☐ **IMAGE CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES**
- ☒ **FADED TEXT OR DRAWING**
- ☐ **BLURRED OR ILLEGIBLE TEXT OR DRAWING**
- ☐ **SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES**
- ☐ **COLOR OR BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS**
- ☐ **GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS**
- ☐ **LINES OR MARKS ON ORIGINAL DOCUMENT**
- ☐ **REFERENCE(S) OR EXHIBIT(S) SUBMITTED ARE POOR QUALITY**
- ☐ **OTHER:** _____

IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.

As rescanning these documents will not correct the image problems checked, please do not report these problems to the IFW Image Problem Mailbox.